

Training will be valuable during time of crisis

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Virginia Guard Soldiers head to Oklahoma to train on search and extraction



Sgt. Katy Trissel examines her equipment in preparation for the Basic Search and Extraction Course. Six Soldiers from Charlie Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion travelled to Oklahoma City to attend the week-long training.

Six Virginia Guard Soldiers the spent the week of July 14 to 19 in Oklahoma City to participate in a civilian-lead basic search and extraction course. Participants in the Enhanced Response Force Package Basic Course are provided opportunities to develop skills with situations involving confined space structural collapses.

Five of the Soldiers are from the Charlottesville-based Charlie Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, and one Soldier serves in the Virginia Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological/ Nuclear and Explosive - Enhanced Response Force.

This course deals with rescue tool techniques and tactics of confined space entry, rope use and and rigging. The training provides the Virginia Guard and Virginia with a valuable tool in the event of a terrorist incident or natural disaster, said said Maj. Elena Scarbrough, Charlie Company commander.

The training also covers pre-hospital trauma life support where medical personnel learn how to treat and stabilize a patient as part of the search and extraction process.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/july2008/charliemed.html>

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

West Point-based 237th Engineer Company scheduled to return to Virginia

Approximately 105 Soldiers from the West Point-based 237th Engineer Company returned to the United States July 16 after serving in Iraq since September 2007. The unit is tentatively scheduled to return to their home armory in Virginia July 20.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/july2008/237threturn.html>

General Assembly unanimously passes Iraqi Veterans License Plate

The Virginia General Assembly unanimously voted to establish an Iraqi Freedom Veteran license plate in Virginia. The bill passed 98 – 0 in the House and 34 – 0 in the Senate and it now moves to the Governor for his signature.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/july2008/iraqifreedomplate.html>

29th Army Band entertains Commonwealth during summer annual training

Soldiers from the Roanoke-based 29th Army Band performed a community concert for a large audience June 30, at Gypsy Park in Staunton, part of its annual training which included seven concerts, one pass and review and one parade over 11 days and took place throughout the entire state.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/july2008/29thBand.html>

Two Virginians make All-Guard Marathon Team

The seven-person Virginia National Guard Marathon Team competed in the Lincoln/National Guard Marathon May 4 in Lincoln, Neb. and two Virginia Guard runners earned spots on the All Guard Team.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/july2008/marathon.html>

Mark Your Calendars!

July 28 to Aug. 1: Noble Resolve

Noble Resolve is a U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) experimentation campaign plan to enhance homeland defense and improve military support to civil authorities in advance of and following natural and man-made disasters. The Virginia National Guard will participate as well as many other state and federal agencies.

July 24: Registration Deadline for Single Soldier Retreat

A Single Soldiers Retreat is scheduled on 9-10 Aug. in Portsmouth. This is a new program that is being offered for the first time assist single Soldiers in making smart partner choices. To register or for more information contact Kay Baber at 1-888-483-2682.

Joint Operations Center keeps Virginia Guard moving

Ever wonder what goes on behind the scenes whenever the Virginia National Guard is called on for assistance? Or how the Adjutant General keeps track of thousands of personnel conducting missions all over the globe?

You might be surprised to learn that a small group of highly professional Guardsmen work around the clock and are responsible for these monumental tasks. They are the members of the Joint Operations Center. The JOC is the Guard's incident management control center that monitors situations statewide and around the world. Wherever Virginia Guardsmen may be, the JOC is there to keep track of them.

"They are the eyes and ears of the TAG," said Capt. Jim Morris, officer in charge of the JOC. "A group of dedicated Guardsmen who work 24 hours a day, seven days a week to ensure that the lines of communication remain open, and to identify potential situations that could impact the Virginia National Guard or the state."

Although the JOC has been in operation for some time, it was not until after the terror attacks of 9/11 that the JOC was reconfigured to boost communication and incident management capabilities. This reconfiguration paved the way for a significant upgrade in mission tasking and allowed for interoperability with other agencies and emergency services within the state as well as JOCs from other states.

Along with this came new skill sets, raising the bar for those assigned. However, according to Morris the Virginia Guard has no shortage on talent.

"We have a great team working in the JOC, each one was hand-picked based on their experience and expertise," Morris said. "Many of them have several deployments under their belts and are used to working in stressful environments. The Virginia Guard is full of people with great skills and it really shows here."

When JOC personnel are not actively engaged in an emergency situation, they monitor weather activity, retrieve communications and evaluate intelligence reports. Information from combat zones where Virginia Guard troops are located, as well as other operations around the world, are fed directly to the JOC.

Since 9/11, the JOC has managed an array of situations from Hurricane Katrina, border missions in Arizona, and numerous deployments, to flooding and forest fires right here at home.

Earlier this year, Gov. Tim Kaine declared a state of emergency in response to wildfires reported in over 60 localities. Within minutes, the JOC sprung into action.

Working with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF), the JOC coordinated the fire line training and movement of 100 guard personnel to Bedford and Roanoke counties and placed two Blackhawk helicopters into service.

It was just one example of how the JOC interfaces with other agencies to get help where it is needed. Between June 22 - 27, the JOC participated in an exercise dubbed "Operation Cardinal



Staff Sgt. Paula Betz (left) and Sgt. 1st Class Butch Downing, oversee Sgt. John Aird as he monitors incidents during training at the Joint Operations Center Exercise at Fort Pickett June 25.

Defense." It was a scenario-based exercise that focused on terrorist activity in Northern Virginia.

As hurricane season shifts into high gear, JOC personnel keeps a watchful out for any potential storms headed our way.

"We track any storm that develops in its infancy stage, whether it be on the horn of Africa or in the Caribbean. If it has a track that might impact our state, we initiate a warning order 120 hours out," Morris said. "This lets our units know to be on standby and to await further instructions."

During an emergency, there is nothing more important than getting help to those in need. From natural disasters to homeland security, the JOC is the nerve center of the Virginia Guard.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/july2008/JOC.html>

MORE ON THE WEB

FAQ's: Defense Support of Civil Authorities

http://www.defenselink.mil/policy/sections/policy_offices/hd/faqs/defenseSupport/index.html

Nobel Resolve

<http://www.jfcom.mil/about/experiments/nobleresolve.html>

Enhanced Response Force Package Basic Course

<http://www.r-i-g.com/Courses.html>

Virginia Iraqi Freedom License Plate

<http://www.myspace.com/ivfplate>

Army National Guard Marathon Program

<http://www.virtualarmory.com/recruiting/mission.aspx>